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May 26, 2010

Bureau of Reclamation
Attn: Peter Crookston, PRO-774
302 East 1860 South
Provo, Utah 84606-7317

Re: Narrows Project

Dear Mr. Crookston,

I am writing to comment on the recently-released Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Narrows Project (Narrows) in Sanpete County. I strongly urge the Bureau of Reclamation to come to a favorable Record of Decision for the Narrows as soon as possible.

Water is a scarce commodity in the western United States. As the second driest state in the country, this is especially true for Utah. Central Utah has been a prime beneficiary of the Bureau's water development resources.

Neighboring Scofield Dam was created by a Bureau project in 1925. The Bureau then oversaw construction projects at Scofield in 1943, 1997, and 2007. Despite these successful efforts, a 2006 study by Fransen Noble Engineering found that roughly 9,733 acre-feet of water continues to flow from Gooseberry and Fish Creeks, through Scofield Reservoir, and on to the Colorado River.

Agreements were reached during the 1930's between water-weary Carbon and Sanpete Counties to increase water for the area and to capture this lost water. Carbon County has already received the water they were promised from the deal and Sanpete is closer than ever to receiving theirs.

The Narrows project will allow Sanpete County to access their legally-guaranteed 5,400 acre-feet of water, prevent regional water loss, and continue the successful local/federal partnership in central Utah.

The original agreement between Carbon and Sanpete Counties allocated 30,000 acre-feet to Carbon and 17,000 acre-feet to Sanpete. In an effort to resolve the conflict, Sanpete reduced their water right from 17,000 acre-feet down to 5,400 acre-feet. Despite this sacrifice, opponents still insist the Narrows will create a regional water shortage. I disagree with this assertion. The Narrows will capture roughly 4,234 out of the 9,733 acre-feet of water that is currently lost. This means in non-drought years 5,499 acre-feet of water will continue to be lost to the Colorado

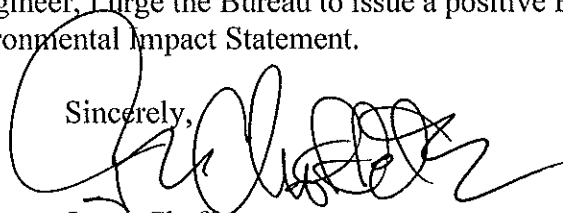
River. Thus, the region will have access to this 5,499 acre-feet. The claim that the Narrows will create a water shortage is overstated.

The three Bureau projects at the Scofield Dam have been funded under a federal-local cost share agreement. Under these agreements, 85% of the work has been covered by federal taxpayers and 15% by the water users. As noted above, Sanpete County is seeking assistance for the Narrows through the Bureau's Small Reclamation Projects Act loan program. The US taxpayer will be repaid under this arrangement.

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program has invested nearly \$20 million in the Price/San Rafael Rivers region (Emery, Carbon, Wayne, and Garfield Counties). As a result, approximately 36,050 acre-feet of water rights in the region have been enhanced. Alfalfa production in the area is enjoying a rising trend. Recent surveys show 95% of people in the Price/San Rafael Rivers region believe the salinity control program has had a positive impact on local economies. This is yet another example of successful local/federal partnership in the region. It would be hypocritical for beneficiaries of the Salinity Program to criticize federal investment in the Narrows project.

The Bureau of Reclamation's mission is to assist western communities in their struggle with the arid West. Sanpete County was promised this water storage project over 80 years ago. Federal investment in the area has proven successful. And in the case of the Narrows, the initial federal investment will be paid back. With support from the Utah House of Representatives, Utah State Senate and the State [Water] Engineer, I urge the Bureau to issue a positive Record of Decision on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Chaffetz', written over a large, loopy 'C' that serves as a flourish.

Jason Chaffetz
Member of Congress